



COUNCIL

Communicates

Highlights from City Council Meetings

December 9, 2026

Petersburg Public Library

City Council Members

Ward 1

Marlow Jones

mjones@petersburg-va.org

Ward 2

Darrin Hill

Vice Mayor

dhill@petersburg-va.org

Ward 3

Samuel Parham

Mayor

sparham@petersburg-va.org

Ward 4

Charles Cuthbert

ccuthbert@petersburg-va.org

Ward 5

W. Howard Myers

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Ward 6

Anette Smith-Lee

alee@petersburg-va.org

Ward 7

Arnold Westbrook

awestbrook@petersburg-va.org

Please Note:

These are not the official minutes of the City Council meeting.

The official minutes and agendas can be accessed on the city website:

www.petersburg-va.org

Please note that the official minutes are not posted until approved by City Council.

Closed Session

3:00 pm

1. Roll Call
Councilmembers Cuthbert, Jones, and Myers were not present on roll call.
2. Unfinished Business
Motion approved to direct the City Attorney to withdraw the City's Appeal in the Petersburg Circuit Court Case No. 25-409.
3. The purpose of this meeting is to convene in the closed session pursuant to:
 - a. §2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion or Consideration of the Acquisition of Real Property for a Public Purpose and the Disposition of Publicly Held Real Property Where Discussion in an Open Meeting Would Adversely Affect the Bargaining Position or Negotiating Strategy of the Minutes from the Petersburg City Council Closed Session held on December 9, 2025 2 Public Body, Specifically Including But Not Limited to the Acquisition and Disposition of Real Property; and
 - b. §2.2-3711(A)(7) and (8) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Receiving Legal Advice and Status Update from the City Attorney and Legal Consultation Regarding the Subject of Actual or Probable Litigation and Specific Legal Matters Requiring the Provisions of Legal Advice by the City Attorney, Specifically Including But Not Limited to Discussion Regarding the Legal Requirements of 15.2-953 of the Code of Virginia; Petersburg Circuit Court Case No. CL25000409- 00; and Other Probable Litigation and Legal Matters Requiring the Advice of the City Attorney; and

- c. §2.2-3711(A)(6) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion or Consideration of the Subject Matter of the Investment of Public Funds Where Competition or Bargaining is Involved, Where, if Made Public Initially, the Financial Interest of the City Would Be Adversely Affected; and
- d. §2.2-3711(A)(29) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion Regarding the Subject of Award of a Public Contract Involving the Expenditure of Public Funds, and Discussion of the Terms or Scope of Such Contract, Where Discussion in an Open Session Would Adversely Affect the Bargaining Position or Negotiating Strategy of the Public Body.

A motion was approved to authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to settle a disputed claim concerning a utility account.

A motion was approved to direct the Clerk to advertise and include this item on the agenda for the Council's next meeting for a Public Hearing, second reading, and consideration for the adoption of an Ordinance to appropriate funds for the new Courthouse construction project.

A motion was approved to authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to settle a disputed claim concerning utility account no 7716508 – service no 9512195, consistent with the terms of the December 5, 2025, correspondence.

3. Adjournment

Regular City Council Meeting

5:00 pm

- 1. Roll Call
All present except Councilman Myers.
- 2. Prayer
Led by Vice Mayor Hill.
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance
Led by Mayor Parham.
- 4. Determination of the Presence of a Quorum
Quorum present.
- 5. Proclamations/Recognitions/Presentation of Ceremonial Proclamations
 - a. Presentation of Proclamation to the Family of Deacon Edward Reuben Riley
- 6. Responses to Previous Public Information Posted
Council Communicates.

7. Approval of Consent Agenda (to include minutes of previous meetings):
 - a. Minutes of Previous Meeting:
 - November 18, 2025, Closed Session Meeting
 - November 18, 2025, City Council Meeting

Consent agenda approved.
8. Presentations
 - a. Presentation from Virginia Economic Development Partnership
Tabled.
 - b. FY25 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report
Tabled.
9. Official Public Hearings
 - a. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 Grants Fund Centre Hill Grant
No Public Comments.
Approved.
 - b. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 General Fund \$3.1 million for Sports Training Facility
No Public Comments.
Approved.
 - c. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance to Appropriate Funds for the Courthouse Construction Project
\$80.2 million
No Public Comments.
Approved.
 - d. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance to Approve an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg for the Purpose of Clarifying and Updating Regulations on Recreational Substance Retail Uses by Defining Vape Shop and Cigar Lounge Uses and Specifying Their Allowance in the City
No Public Comments.
Approved.
 - e. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance to Approve a Request by Rudalma Mata, on Behalf Ruth Investments, LLC, to Rezone Property at 318 Irving Street, Parcel ID 006050012 from the M-2, Heavy Industrial District to R-3, Two-Family Residence District
No Public Comments.
Approved.

f. Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Purchase Agreement Between the City of Petersburg and I AM POWER to Purchase the City-Owned Properties at 35 and 17 Bank Street, Located in Petersburg, VA

Request from the applicant to defer any action on this item to the January 20, 2026, meeting.

10. Public Information Period

A public information period, limited in time to 30 minutes, shall be part of an Order of Business at each regular council meeting. Each speaker shall be a resident or business owner of the City and shall be limited to three minutes. No speaker will be permitted to speak on any item scheduled for consideration on the regular docket of the meeting at which the speaker is to speak. The order of speakers, limited by the 30-minute time period, shall be determined as follows:

- a. First, in chronological order of the notice, persons who have notified the Clerk no later than 12:00 noon of the day of the meeting,
- b. Second, in chronological order of their sign up, persons who have signed a sign-up sheet placed by the Clerk in the rear of the meeting room prior to the meeting removed from consent agenda

No Public Comments.

11. Business or reports from the Mayor or other Members of City Council
Councilman Westbrook

He expressed holiday greetings and highlighted several community updates. He announced the annual speech and debate tournament at PHS, led by Coach Terry Smith, featuring over 11 speech categories and debates at Vernon Johns. A joint Ward 6 and 7 meeting will be held on January 13 with Councilwoman Smith-Lee. He proposed a ward competition for the best holiday decorations to boost city pride for 2026 and more promotion of Kwanzaa. He highlighted progress in reducing vape shops and blighted houses, collaboration with Senator Aird on initiatives supporting black boys, and his excitement for Wilcox Lake's development, envisioning more children enjoying sledding there in the future.

Councilwoman Smith-Lee

Councilwoman Smith-Lee congratulated Coach Jerome Mathis, his staff, and the football team on their runner-up finish in the regional championship, praising their efforts and Wave Pride. She commended Mathis for his exceptional leadership, deeming him worthy of the Coach of the Year award. She also celebrated Coach Ty White and the basketball team for their impressive performance at Virginia State College, noting the record-breaking turnout. Additionally, she congratulated Coach Harrison and the girls' basketball team, wishing them success in their game. She reminded everyone of the joint Wards 6 and 7 meeting on January 13 at the Petersburg Public Library. She expressed gratitude to Pat Hines for her work in establishing a homeless shelter during the harsh winter. She encouraged donations to support the cause.

Vice Mayor Hill

Vice Mayor Hill thanked Public Works for maintaining safe streets during inclement weather and expressed gratitude to Council, staff, and residents for their dedication. He emphasized the importance of staying focused on their goals despite challenges. The Vice Mayor congratulated the football and basketball teams, encouraging advance ticket purchases due to high community enthusiasm. He also thanked participants of the business roundtable and looked forward to future events. He celebrated the success of the Christmas parade, commending the Recreation Department and all contributors for creating a festive atmosphere. Hill congratulated Council Member Smith-Lee on her retirement from the Defense General Supply Center and acknowledged her service. He noted the upcoming courthouse ribbon-cutting on December 16 and expressed gratitude to City employees and residents for their support in 2025, looking forward to a prosperous 2026.

Mayor Parham

Mayor Parham reflected on attending Councilwoman Smith-Lee's retirement luncheon, praising her impact on the community. He thanked Richard Harris and Public Works for their tireless efforts to keep streets and sidewalks safe during the snowstorm. The Mayor highlighted the December 16 groundbreaking for the courthouse complex and announced the December 12 opening of the South Side Depot as a Visitor Center, celebrating the completion of a decade-long project and commending Councilman Cuthbert's dedication. He also praised the Parks and Recreation team for the successful Christmas parade and tree illumination. He noted that everyone enjoyed the Holiday Homes Tour and the Petersburg Symphony concert. He acknowledged the impressive turnout at Virginia State for Petersburg's basketball game, emphasizing Coach White's role in developing exceptional student-athletes and a strong athletic culture.

12. Items removed from Consent Agenda
None.
13. Finance and Budget Report
None.
14. Unfinished Business
 - a. Consideration of an Ordinance to Approve an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg for the Purpose of Updating and Clarifying Sign and Advertising Regulations to Address Ongoing Complaints and Issues Pertaining to Certain Advertising Devices Throughout the City
Approved.
 - b. 2026 Legislative Agenda
Approved with the addition of placing additional taxes on Vape shops.

c. Adoption of the FY2027 Budget Calendar

Tabled.

15. New Business

a. Consideration of a Joint Resolution to Change the Name of Petersburg Community Corrections to Gateway Justice Services

Approved.

b. Consideration of Appointment to Fill an Unexpired Term on the Petersburg Arts Council

Jennifer Murphy James was appointed.

16. City Manager's Report and Special Reports

The City Manager thanked citizens for attending despite the weather and praised Richard Harris and Public Works for clearing streets after recent snowfalls. He commended Mr. Allen and his team for the successful parade and tree lighting, as well as various departments and individuals for their efforts in making downtown shine. He also thanked the Petersburg Area Art League (PAAL) for assisting with the new Christmas tree location. He expressed excitement about future partnerships with PAAL and the Tourism Office at South Side Depot. He supported Council Member Westbrook's idea for a holiday light contest and had already begun planning a light event for homes and businesses. He acknowledged Commonwealth Lighting for its excellent work on downtown lighting. Concluding the year, he wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

17. Business or reports from the Clerk

None.

18. Business or reports from the City Attorney

None.

19. Adjournment